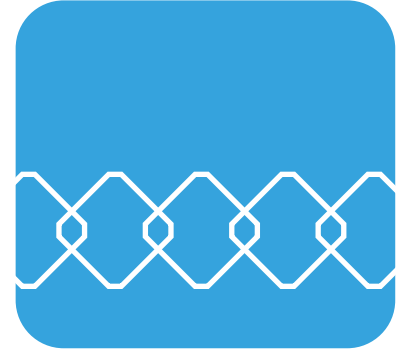




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THE NEW GENERATIONS PROGRAM



Kate Trimble
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Young People in the Pittsburgh Region: A Data Snapshot from the 2000 Census

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Analysis of recent and historical Census data shows...

The young population in our region has declined significantly. Between 1980 and 2000, the age group of 20 to 34 year olds declined by more than 200,000 people in the ten-county Pittsburgh region. This represents a 32 percent decline from 1980 levels.

Currently, almost half a million 20 to 34 year olds live in the Pittsburgh region. Fifty percent live in Allegheny County, while the remaining half live in the nine outlying counties.

The region's young people are not monolithic. There is considerable variation among the 10 counties of southwestern Pennsylvania.

Compared to young people in the U.S. as a whole, young residents of Southwestern Pennsylvania are less racially and ethnically diverse; are slightly more likely to be single; have lower median household incomes; are equally likely to be poor and enrolled in school; and have higher education levels.

PITTSBURGH'S DEMOGRAPHIC DILEMMA

The Pittsburgh region is in the midst of an urgent conversation about its future. Demography, the science of population, is suddenly a hot topic for politicians, industry leaders, and media types. With terms like "labor shortage" and "population hemorrhage" hanging in the air, influential civic institutions are talking about the importance of attracting and retaining young people of every stripe: college students, knowledge or technology workers, skilled manufacturing workers, African American professionals, foreign-born and immigrant populations, to name just a few.

These leaders understand that our current situation is more than an ugly curve on a demographic chart; it has very real implications for the region's current and future economic health. Overall population losses, combined with a larger-than-average elderly population, are redistributing growing tax burdens on an ever-smaller group of working people. Key industries like manufacturing and health care already face challenges in finding qualified workers; absent changes in current demographic trends, these challenges will become more difficult.

Twenty- and thirty-somethings don't just replace older workers or prop up the local economy; they bring tremendous vitality to a region.

They have fresh ideas and diverse experiences, embrace change and take risks, and create healthy, dynamic communities. They also bring economic vigor and innovation. The contributions made by the next generation of Pittsburghers will determine our region's future economic strength and quality of life: eighty percent of new businesses are started by people under the age of 39.¹

What's missing from the current conversation is a clear picture of the young people who already call the Pittsburgh region home. In order to understand the different characteristics and challenges faced by young people from Aliquippa to Oakland to Zelienople, we set out to get a "snapshot" of young people throughout the entire Pittsburgh region. This research brief aims to develop a more detailed picture of Pittsburgh's next generation by answering some of the most basic demographic questions underlying the talent attraction and retention conversation. This information is just the tip of the proverbial iceberg — a foundation for future, more complex investigations into young people's motivations, behavior and priorities and for examinations of how our region compares with other places.

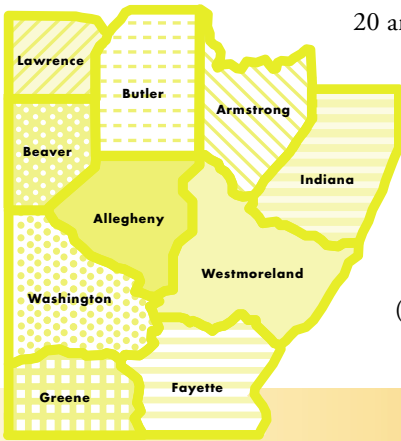


WHO ARE "YOUNG" PITTSBURGHERS?



The New Generations Program defined "young" Pittsburghers as individuals between the ages of 20 and 34² — working-age people in the early stages of their work histories and careers, getting married and starting families, continuing their educations, preparing to settle down but still highly mobile. This age group aligns neatly with Census and other demographic categories, and avoids dipping too low (into high school students) and too high (into the middle-aged population).

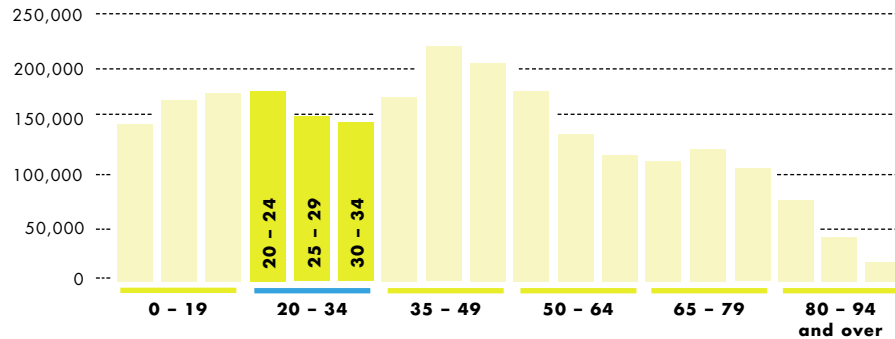
Using the 2000 Census data,³ we analyzed data for ten counties in the Pittsburgh region: Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Lawrence, Washington, and Westmoreland.⁴ A separate analysis was conducted for each county. Where possible, we also compared regional data from 2000 with prior years and with national averages for 2000. The Census data used for this analysis is available at www.newgenerations.info.



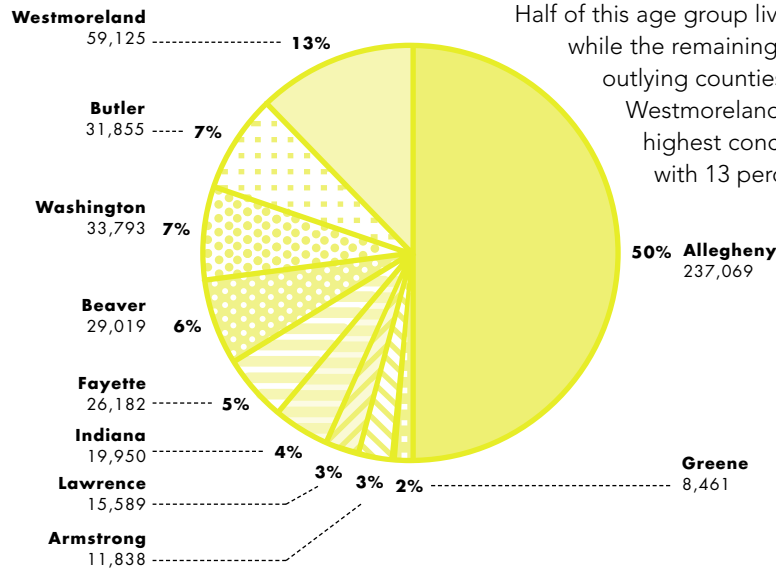
REGIONAL POPULATION

In 2000, the 10-county Pittsburgh region contained roughly 2.7 million people. There were slightly fewer than a half a million people (472,881) between the ages of 20 and 34. This age group accounted for 18 percent of the region's entire population.

Pittsburgh Regional Population by Age
2000



Pittsburgh Region's 20-34 Year Olds by County
2000



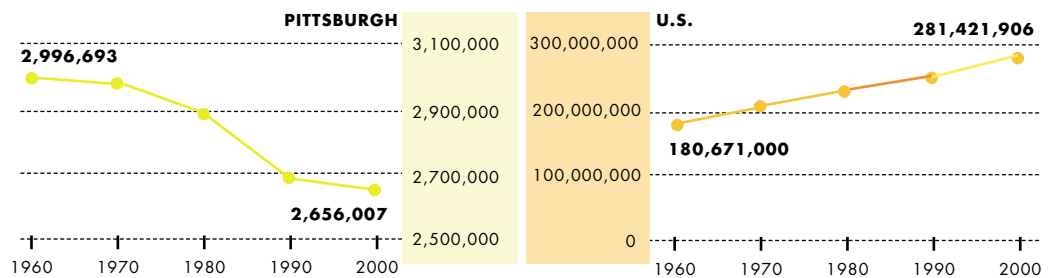
Half of this age group lives in Allegheny County, while the remaining half lives in the nine outlying counties. After Allegheny County, Westmoreland County had the next highest concentration of young people, with 13 percent of the region's total.

Trends Over Time

Between 1960 and 1970, both the overall and young populations in the Pittsburgh region were relatively stable, with just under 3 million people and more than half a million young people. In 1980, these two trends diverged: the overall population began declining, while the young (20 – 34) group spiked at nearly 700,000 — the highest level in our 40-year comparison period.

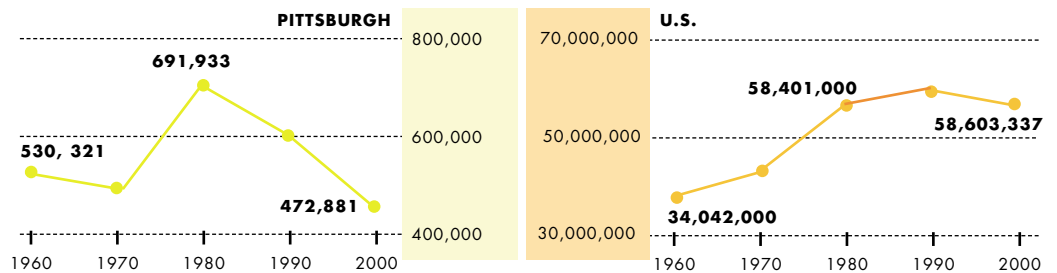
In the United States as a whole, the total population experienced steady growth: between 1980 and 2000, the population grew by 24 percent, compared to the Pittsburgh region's 8 percent decline. Between 1990 and 2000, the U.S. population grew by 13 percent, compared to a one percent decline in southwestern Pennsylvania.

Total Regional Population vs. Total U.S. Population 1960 – 2000



Nationally, the young population curve remained fairly flat between 1980 and 2000, with neither significant growth nor decline. During the same time period, however, the 20 to 34 age group in southwestern Pennsylvania declined by 219,052 people — a 32 percent decline from 1980 levels. In the last decade (1990 to 2000), there was a 6 percent decline in 20 – 34 year olds nationally and a 21 percent decline locally.

Young Regional Population vs. Young U.S. Population 1960 – 2000



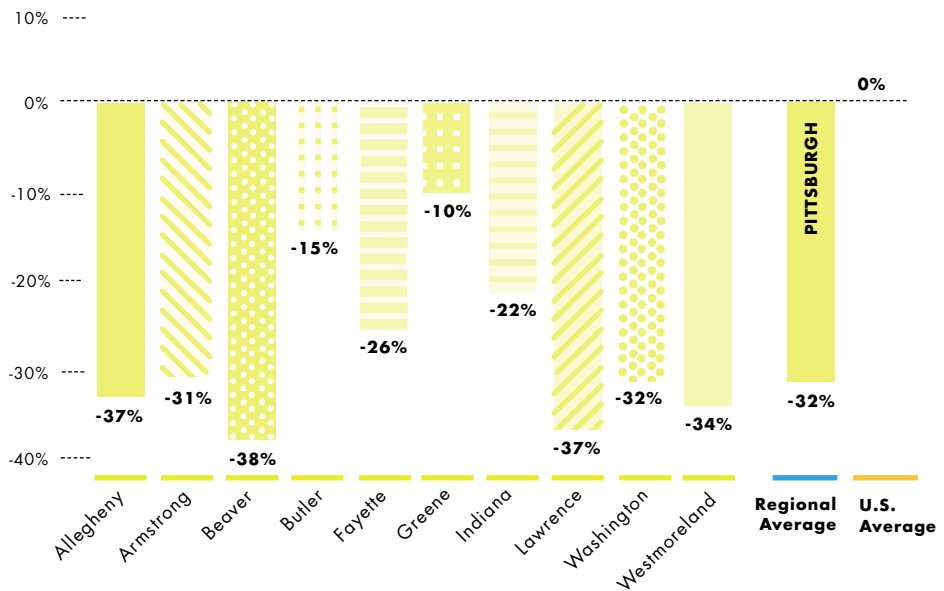
Between 1980 and 2000, the 20-34 age group in the Pittsburgh region declined by 32 percent; nationally, the age group grew by 0.3 percent.

The young population's share of the total population declined as well. In 1980, 24 percent of Southwestern Pennsylvania residents was between the ages of 20 and 34; in 2000, only 18 percent of residents fell into this age group.

Since 1980, individual counties' declines ranged from a low of 10 percent in Greene County to a high of 38 percent in Beaver County.



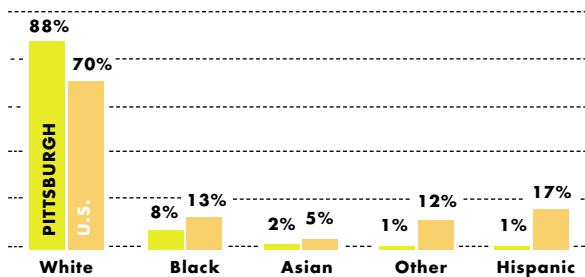
Change in Population Aged 20 – 34, by County 1980 – 2000



Race & Ethnicity

Young people in the 10-county Pittsburgh region are predominantly white (88 percent). There is a relatively small black population (8 percent), and the remaining 4 percent are Asian, some other race, or bi- or multi-racial. In the United States as a whole, whites made up 70 percent and blacks 13 percent of the 20 – 34 population. Hispanics comprised only one percent of the young population in the Pittsburgh region, compared with 17 percent nationwide.

Race & Ethnicity of 20 – 34 Year Olds Pittsburgh Region vs. U.S. Average 2000



Young people in southwestern Pennsylvania are significantly less racially and ethnically diverse than the nation as a whole.

HOME AND FAMILY

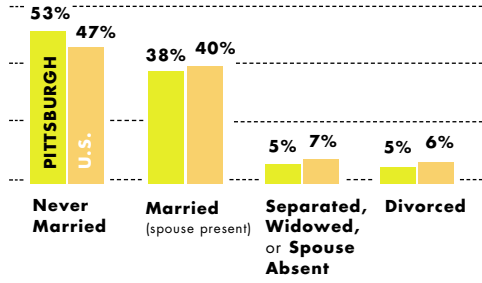
Marital Status

The majority of young Pittsburghers in the region is single and has never been married. More than a third are currently married, while another ten percent have been married but are currently either divorced, separated, widowed, or their spouse is absent for some unspecified reason. Compared to the nation's young people, Pittsburghers are slightly more likely to be single.

These figures vary significantly when looking at individual counties. For instance, nearly 60 percent of young people in Indiana County have never been married, while in Armstrong County, only 41 percent have never been married.

**Marital Status of
20 - 34 Year Olds
Pittsburgh Region vs.
U.S. Average
2000**

The Pittsburgh region has a larger share of single/never married young people than the U.S. on average.



INCOME AND POVERTY

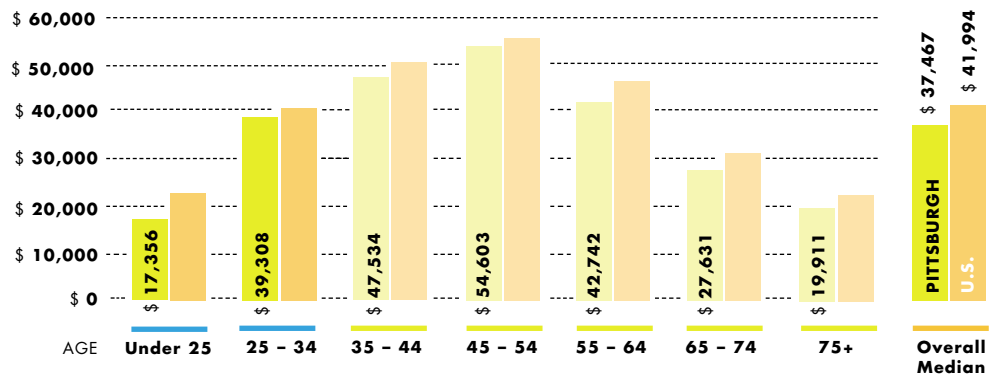
Median Household Income

The median income for households headed by individuals under 25 is \$17,356, while households headed by 25 to 34 year olds average more than twice that, with \$39,308.⁵

National medians are somewhat higher than those for Pittsburgh, with 25-and-under households earning an average of \$22,679 and 25-34 households earning an average of \$41,414.

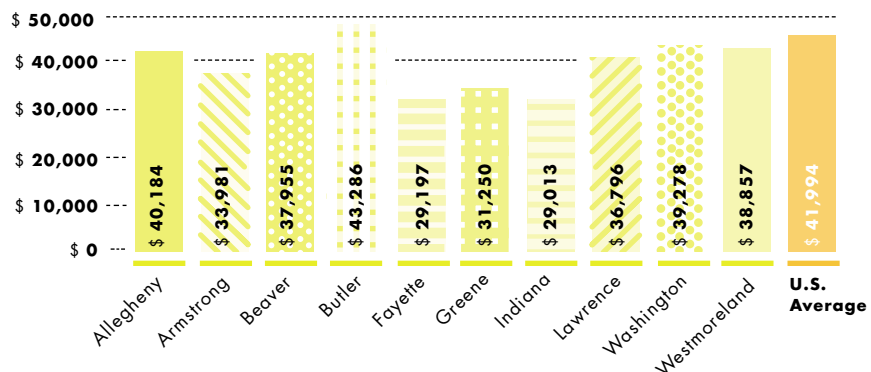
Median Household Income by Age Pittsburgh Region vs. U.S. Average 1999

Compared to national averages, median incomes are consistently lower in the Pittsburgh region.



There is substantial variation among the individual counties' median incomes. Median incomes for 25 to 34 year olds range from a high of \$43,286 in Butler County to a low of \$29,013 in Indiana County.

25 - 34 Median Household Income by County 1999



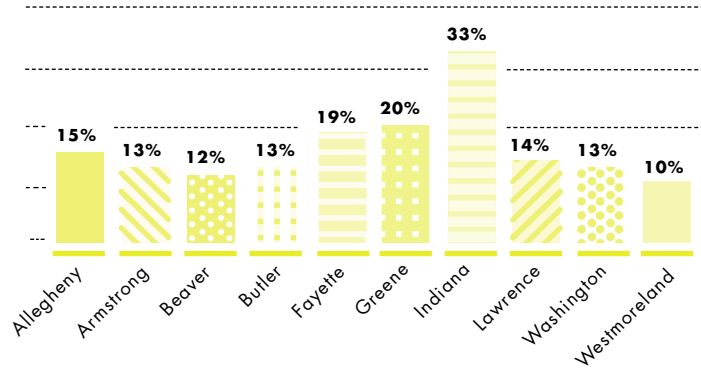


Poverty Status

Compared to older people in the region (35 to 64), young Pittsburghers (18 to 34 years old for this indicator) are substantially more likely to be poor. Fifteen percent of young people are poor, compared to eight percent of older people. The poverty rate for young people in the region parallels national averages for the age group (also 15 percent for 18 to 34 year olds).

Where are young people poor in the region? Indiana County stands out with one in three young people below the poverty line (most likely attributable to the large numbers of low-earning students in that county), while only one in ten young people are poor in Westmoreland County.⁶

Poverty Rate by County
2000



Aggregate Household Income

Aggregate household income is the sum of all income generated by the households within a particular group. It is a helpful indicator in examining the distribution of income by age and may also be a rough proxy for the relative spending power of a group.

In southwestern Pennsylvania, the total amount of income generated by households headed by people aged 15-34 is slightly more than \$5 billion dollars. However, total regional household income is almost \$42 billion. Young households only account for 12 percent of total household income in the region, less than their proportion of the population (18 percent). Nationally, the aggregated household income for the 15 to 34 age group accounts for 15 percent of all aggregate income, again lower than the 21 percent "young" share of the U.S. population.

SCHOOL AND WORK

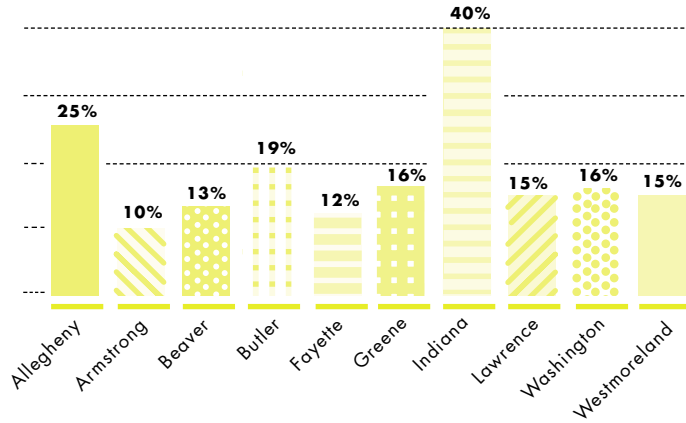
School Enrollment

School Enrollment: Twenty percent of the region's young people are currently enrolled in school.⁷ This is, not surprisingly, almost ten times higher than the proportion of all people over 35 enrolled in school (2 percent). National rates for school enrollment are very similar to those for young Pittsburghers: 19 percent of young U.S. residents are currently enrolled.

Due to the presence of Indiana University of Pennsylvania and a relatively small base population, Indiana County stands out among individual counties with an extremely high proportion of young students, with 40 percent of 20-34 year olds currently enrolled. Armstrong County has the lowest percentage of young people enrolled in school (10 percent).

School Enrollment of 20 – 34 Year Olds by County

2000

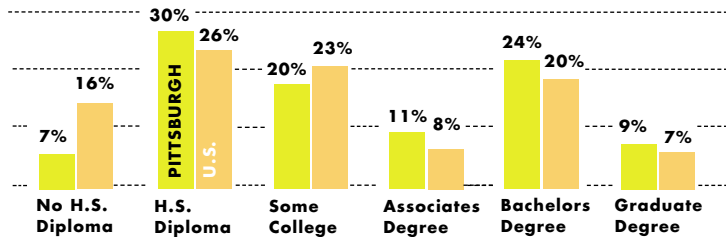


Educational Attainment

Compared to national averages, young Pittsburghers are more highly educated. They are more likely to have graduated from high school — 16 percent of young people nationally have not received a high school degree or graduate equivalency degree versus only 7 percent in the region. Young people in the region are also more likely to have completed college or graduate school (33 percent versus 28 percent nationally).

Educational Attainment of Regional 25 – 34 Year Olds vs. U.S. Average

2000



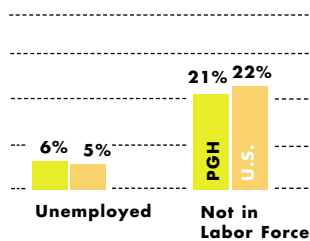
Employment Status

In 2000, the unemployment rate for 20 – 34 year olds was 6 percent in the Pittsburgh region.⁸ This is similar to the national average for the age group (5 percent).

Slightly more than one in five young people was not in the labor force in 2000. Individuals categorized as “not in the labor force” are not currently employed and have not actively sought work in the previous 4 weeks. This may include disabled persons unable to work, full-time homemakers and students. This is roughly the same as national averages for 20 – 34 year olds.

Unemployment Status for 20 – 34 Year Olds Pittsburgh Region vs. U.S. Average

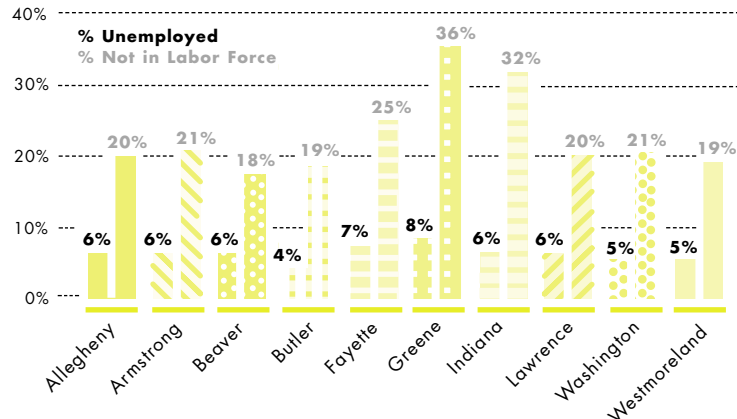
2000





20 - 34 Year Olds Unemployed or Not in Labor Force by County 2000

Young people in southwestern Pennsylvania are not unemployed or out of the labor force significantly more than young people nationwide.



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NEXT STEPS

We hope that this information provides an initial foundation for future discussion and benchmarking, but realize that it raises as many questions as it answers. What are the regional and economic implications of this demographic decline? What do projections of future trends in population changes look like? Is a demographic crisis looming in the future, or are we experiencing the aftershocks of previous population losses? How do we measure up to other regions? And finally, what can be done about the current demographic imbalance?

In the coming year, the New Generations program will prepare regular data briefs on the region's young people. We will build on this base of information and conduct research that attempts to clarify the motivations, challenges and needs of our region's young people.

The New Generations Program was created by the Coro Center for Civic Leadership to help inform a wide range of regional demographic conversations and initiatives. New Generations staff conducts applied research that is aimed at developing a better understanding of the region's talent attraction and retention challenges. Coro would like to thank the Richard King Mellon Foundation for their generous support of the New Generations Program.

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Please visit our website at
www.newgenerations.info

END NOTES

¹ Jean Chatzky, "Gen Xers Aren't Slackers After All," Time, April 8, 2002, pg. 87.

² In some cases, the U.S. Census Bureau did not break out data along these age lines; where these exceptions occur, they are noted.

³ We used one of the most comprehensive datasets available: the Summary File 3 of the 2000 U.S. Census. This data is available on the U.S. Census Bureau website at <http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html>. Summary File 3 contains sample data that provide an unusually high level of detail on the characteristics, habits and housing conditions of Americans. The most recent Census data was collected in 1999, and we expect that conditions have not changed substantially in the intervening three or four years.

⁴ While the official Census definition of the Pittsburgh "region" or Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) includes only six counties, most regional civic institutions, including the Pittsburgh Regional Alliance and the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, use the 10-county definition. We also prefer and use the larger geography.

⁵ Please note that the median income data is for the Pittsburgh Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), a 6-county regional definition rather than the 10-county definition used elsewhere in this report.

⁶ Indiana County is a good example of how large student populations can skew the poverty figures for an area. While students may technically be below the poverty line in terms of their earnings, they are in a different situation than low-income people who are not in school and do not receive financial support from family or student loans.

⁷ People are classified as enrolled in school if they reported attending a "regular" public or private school or college anytime between February 1, 2000 and the time of enumeration.

⁸ The Census Bureau has acknowledged problems with their employment-status data: "The labor force data for some places where colleges are located appear to overstate the number in the labor force, the number unemployed, and the percent unemployed, probably because of reporting or processing errors. [...] The potential effect... is to increase the count of unemployed people at the expense of the counts of the employed and the not-in-labor-force groups." See Data Note 4 for Summary File 3 at <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/notes/errata.pdf>.